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THE HUNT

Bid the white fox
Run through clover,
The lean hound searches
The meadow over,

Captures no hint
On the scented air,
Will never find
The secret lair.

Shadow defeats
Substance ever,
The veil of sense
Is lifted never

Until the hound
Lies panting, done—
Then shall he
And the fox be one.

Marden Dahlstedt

IN OSTIA

ALONE, gladly alone,
I held a gold-eyed lizard
I had caught scuttling
Across a square of sun-blurred brick
In Ostia.

He was the fine-scaled Caesar of the City,
The throat-proud king of ruins,
Master of empty sun and silence
. . . and dead streets,
Which, twenty hundred years ago
Had pulsed with togas and slaves,
Chariots and centurions.

Then, O then, Ostia was proud Port of Rome
With ten thousand citizens, and wharves
Choked with spoil from the world over,
Cargo'd by galleys creaming the Tiber.

Now all was gone.
Life's only fragment was
My lizard.

I parted my fingers and he flashed
Into a razor-edged shadow,
Deep as ink.

The silence of Ostia had congealed
As the sea dried; a tide of sand
Had come and ebbed, leaving
The city's bones to spellbind me.

I found a wall where long ago
An artist painted corn sheaves
(Did he dream his colors would be seen
Fading on this far shore of time?).
Here was a fish shop, on its floor
A fish still swam in gay mosaic.

Bottle green the cypresses;
Blue, blue the sky—so hot
The flat red bricks!

I trod in a topless temple,
Neptune's.
Who cares now for his dolphined chariot?
Not the lizards.

I climbed tier on tier on tier
Of an amphitheatre where
Comedy and Tragedy had grown old
Jostling each other.

I stood sky-dizzy at the top,
Thoughts combering the reef of my mind
When, far beyond the livid squares,
Once houses, came a laugh—
Brash, young and loud.

Down a heat-throbbing alley I crept
And into a courtyard where
A goddess stood—nude, headless, proud—
While a tourist, in a wallpaper shirt,
Recorded his woman
With ticking movie camera.
In crotch-catching jeans she capered,
Then fell belly flat, her head
Protruding through the stone legs
Of Venus.

Child-like, she waved her limbs
And stuck out her tongue:
"Heiny, this'll wow 'em all
Back home!"

A hole had been punched
In the silence.
Reality flooded in and I left,
For the first time LONELY.

Helen C. Smith

TWO POEMS

Arlene Love: Philadelphia Sculptress

Be not deceived by slender fingers
Or the narrow wrist;
They insist earth leap into shape.

There is a witch in woman
That spells man to his birth
In the wonderous womb.
But she would have a firmer clay
Between her hands than mercury man
Who in a quicksilver flash
Turns from child to man, from bone to ash.

The figures that she shapes
Assault, defy lime and time.
The stone child will never wake
And graven gravid woman never make
The air red with the sound of birth,
But the unwinking eyes
Will stare down the years.
Finger, knee and lip, images so hard
It is the air, not they, will chip.

Cats at her feet,
Elite, alight—
Hair a yellow helmet,
She is poised among her fashioned stones.
Be not deceived by fragile fingers
Or the narrow wrist—
They insist earth leap into shape.

Sy Kahn

Merry-Go-Round

At the center of the whirling world,
At the still point,
David stands tranced
By the prancing, skewered horses
And the circling, golden cars.
Spotted, striped
They gallop in the air,
Flying mares and stallions,
Charging and churning
In the burning summer light.
One hand upon the center pole,
He, not yet four, seems
A tiny Atlas, an axis
For the clanging, tumblerumble world
All shadowed in his
Unblinking, brownblond stare.
And my prayer as I watch him,
He, unruffled except by the wind
In his hair, is this:
That when he has ten times his age
He will be as stable and as sage
At the center of the spinning globe,
Tranced still, aglow,
Moved but unmoving,
Watching the golden horses go.

Sy Kahn

TWO POEMS

Three Elegiacs for My Father

I—Funeral of a Comedian

This is the public thing, my papa propped
In finest cherry wood and velveteen
His hired room waiting and finally become
Loud with floral applause—some so unexpected.
His biography caught, they come to touch
Our mourning hands, to watch—
Hour after hour of them—to say
Only what rises both kind and true.
My father propped and laughterless,
The face not as I will remember it.
The lady from the cafeteria, the druggist,
Sidewalk neighbors, relatives arrived for death
And of course the important ones he wanted,
All noticing the autumn flowers rushing over walls
Into the other rooms until suddenly I am seated
Knowing how many years he has made how much
mirth.
"O Death, where is thy sting" and all of us listen
While Papa hovers to his one of many mansions,
Settles. I cannot grieve while psalms are read,
The audience at solace, the public thing being:
His cherry wood then closed and opulent.
I recall my daughter growing and my wife
Happy with child, my mother at my side in black.
All these years coming, coming
And the public thing, it is done.

II—Pastorale

To get it settled then
My poise as steady as this countryside,
What can I make of grief now
That the months for tears are done tearless?
Shall I forget all but our holidays?
The Saturdays you taught me the city
(Ferryboats, zoos, mummies)
Or the twilights you played ball
Or the Augusts glaring on Cape Cod,
As if you had acted nothing but gala?
But would it be nicer to settle so:
You never cared to measure me
Along the springing of my own growth?
That I have been pleached, wracked, nipped?
In such belief I may carelessly corrupt,
Enjoy my stuntedness as your stupidity
A creature thought to no image, grotesque, excused.
Or might I savagely repent so late
My long splintering of your dream of me?
So, polish my house to a perfection of yours
And me to a success fabulously unfitting.
Then might I prove your immense righteousness
And torture my wife into a likeness of your wife.
Answers soften in such greenery.

This is a pastoral not because I sit on grass
And two seasons later think among birds,
Pastoral because in all simplicity once
Three clear decisions existed, each absurd.
Any pastorale is an air and grace
To play as free as any woodwind.
A seed of me has settled beyond guilt.

I do not even have to know why I care
When in the obvious face of your dying
I could not be moved to understand.
For half my life we destroyed hope
In a contest of exquisite skill.
I will not keep that seed dry,
Sit here toying and unintense
As if the day were a great round noon
The birds to remain mateless and singing.
It will move green along my limbs
To sever the bones, thrive like miracles.
Crack it must through the winters
Till one season, my hand trembling into leaf,
We shall discover that I am someone
We never expected, striding beyond questions
Into a relief we never shared.

III—Memento Mori

Drive far out hot Sunday afternoon
Left turn down the crush white gravel road
Under nave of elms to sun again,
Stones flung across the lawns, until the proper plot.
Here, an area of monuments, step out

From the long car. Women high-heeled, filmed
In their prints and men in summer grey,
Tread beneath their hats to favorite graves,
Newsprint wrapped bouquets protected all the way
From home to here, its monument. Step out.

There it sticks gunblue like dragonflies
Cast in angles of the architect
Metal construct mounting unsurprised
To its baroque urn draped and wrecked;
Spills down transparent grief on our perpetual care.

Here lie the contents of our heads,
Our ganglia, our recipes, our gifts,
Here lie I and you in staid corruption.
And I the child still skip down the road
To draw the flowers water from the central pump
To squeak the air and recollect my father.

Here lie you and I and our tradition
I like such special afternoons with him
With grandpa and wife Anna, Sutphen, the twins
Who died at two, the Baileys, cousins, aunts
The concatenation of my past, I on this end
Swinging like a daisy in the sun.

I like the comfort of the birds and stones
Of damp and worms, the preacher's petals gone.
I rejoice that I shall have my dates
And my wife shall and my many children
While the urn stays trite and honest
Through these summer afternoons.

Bink Noll

Moses on Nebo

Sharp of eye, of voice, lean, but tired
He preceded Joshua and priests
To the outcrop, hurried to look first.
The summit breeze, the view, the end

Of exertion caught them in silence
And pondering the Lord's promise
That, desolate, fell like the dust
On mountains at every perimeter.

Only Jericho a joy in the eye of hope.

It leapt whole from west to Joshua,
An emerald to hide the crust of poverty,
The chalk hills dazzlingly sterile
And the yellow Jordan not broad.

To the south the fishless sea thick in fumes
And salt hills that flashed their limits.
The north, less bleak, shimmered to the eye
Highlands perhaps, snow, even a fast stream.

But Moses' eye dimmed, went hard.

For to the west the same illusion,
The same absence of the facts of Eden:
A crystalline wall, perfect vast straight
Vineyards, the flash of a million fruits

Amid a darkness of large leaves,
Knee-high pasture, gates to march in
At a dignity paced by seraphic song—
Flickered down to anger, to waste.

One gasp at tall Joshua though,

Teeth gleaming, ready to bellow with joy
Frightened the old man at how he'd taught
Their raw hope to leap, to exult thus
Over such evident aridity.

Though exhaustion crept like a truth
Down every finger of his generalship,
He kept on his reverence, his robes
And led their adoration of what?

Of Yahweh? Victory? Himself?

Violence of thought dried the juices in him.
He felt with relief the closing of his eyes,
Heard the tribal grief rise keenly
Through that last moment of his confusion.

Bink Noll

TWO POEMS

Dependency

(For William Carlos Williams)

it was a new morning
and i was looking—
for my slippers.

i found four new kittens
huddled beneath a tongue licking;
three white and one black.

three snows
and a black carnation;
ices melting in a breadless room

Theodore Holmes

Down Boy, Down

ever since
the human race became conscious
enough of itself, to convince itself
a real difference exists
between the prehension and the apprehension,
to refute the ape,
has been its chief concern.

what it accomplished is plain to see:
if two boys and two girls
close between them
patches
on a sidewalk in the Spring,
they bleed their eyes ten feet or more,
fixing them before
a jewel tastes drought in a stone setting;
ten feet, are what it takes to measure them:

A baby's name; a string of loose beads
In the bottom of an open crib.
Before a mirror, naked arms holding
Back soft hair from the neck;
The double you. An invitation like perfume
Until it lies about everything but the dance.
And yet, the anatomy lesson; a canvas
Copied differently since Rembrandt.
Machinery believed crowded under canvas.
The supper taken at Holy Communion
By the few that are ever really hungry.
The protagonist, stuffed and hanging
With an apple in his mouth. The tenth;
Of an animal bleating in untold heat.

the distance of the accomplished feat.

Theodore Holmes

THE FAT MAN IN THE EASY CHAIR

Reads his verse aloud.
Mincing gestures and a florid face
Have captured a college crowd. Two Jewish
Girls are young, and most intent; sniggering
Softly, some better poets rim the room.
An obliged professor yawns secretly.
But most will leave the exhibition
Enriched, and gratified that over coffee
They can talk about their subject, poetry.

The huge fingers of evening enter
The smoky room, touch and merge the meagre
Faces, darken the thin sad skin.
Pigeons,
Somersaulting, catch the last cold rays
Of the bloody sun, glint the empty bowl,
The thin, the distant blue. Through a window
One magnifies, glides smoothly to the ledge,
Softly, coos, struts, puffs his irridescence.
He ignores the stuffy room; the fat man
Puffs his cheeks, ignores the easy pigeon.

Edwin Ochester

ONION

To dream of onions signifies
Illnesses for private eyes
And hearts that are healthy otherwise.

Onion seeds are fairly delicate
But you can check the onion thrip
By spraying seeds with tartar emetic.

For onion smut, use formaldehyde.
For onion dreams—there I'm afraid
You're on your own. I have made

A dream-book survey, and I'm as willing
To share a fact as fear. But the chilling
Truth remains: dreams, like spring

Hunch beyond medicine. Onion
Dreams enormously mean
Like spring. I recommend

You dwell with packaged vegetables,
Thinking winter thoughts involved
With no green leaves or edible bulbs.

Be vigilant against a battered
Heart, and eyes that senseless water
Thinking domestic matters matter.

Hollis Summers

THE APPRAISAL

Heretofore, hereafter, and herewith,
I think of my father and his guns:
A sanguine, emotional man, part bronze,
Divided, and yet blent, by tool and myth.

He was brought up to shoot more rabbits
Than any boy in Davie County;
Carolina is both rich and poor of bounty—
Papa kept a gun trained on his sensual habits.

When he became the Mayor of his town,
He hunted better, and, so I thought, demeaned
Me, holding furry corpses while he cleaned—
I still have dreams of bloody rabbits hanging down.

Harsh smell of dung in their little bodies,
A sound of shot against the pan—
I never liked the work but still can
Eat jugged hare with friends who euphemize.

Devotions in those days were absolute—
Papa saw me as both myth and tool:
Someone, steady as a god, must blood the Golden Rule
And show how strong men differ from the brute.

Charles Edward Eaton

TALL SALT

We met an old mariner
with fish in his pocket.
(Aie, Salvador, nothing can save you).
He'd been floating in brine
for so many years the oils
were all pickled out of him.

(It was a salt barrel he'd sailed
to shrink into such a strong olive).
"Oh the girls!" he said,
watching them pass.
"They go in one eye
"and out the other.
"But when I was young!"
(A young man can jump over an island).
We asked him how long
he'd been on the sea,
and flipping the fish
down into his pocket
(Old Salvador, there is no safety)
he said:
"She's an old, ugly woman
"in her roaring skirts,
"and I've been lost
"in her petticoat since
"I was a boy.
"Here's my mother," he said,
and out of his wallet
he drew a dry mermaid,
pressed like a flower.
(Safe on the earth lie the shipwrecks).
"My father," he said,
"was a sailor before me,
"and found her one night
"aweep on the anchor-line.
"She died on the shore,
"and so did my father.
"Not me!" said the sailor
and drank up his whiskey.
(Have you wept for yourself, Salvador)?

S. Dorman

TWO POEMS

Sparrowfall

A sparrow caught between me and the glass
Chose instantly the window pane, and flung
Its ounce of panic on that footless wall
Till blood broke from its beak, and still it clung
To the harsh mullion, weakly fluttering,
Then crashed the glass again, and crashed again.

"I must have it, take it in my hand."

"Terror of hands may kill if come too close."

"My hand is food, shelter from cold and cat."

"And five huge reptile claws whose scaling pads
Are creased to crush a beak into its throat."

"One wing's already broken; the claws split."

"Bones are only broken when they break.
But to ooze beneath the nails of a Cyclops' fist?
To be rolled, cracked, spat from a roc's beak?"

Alberta T. Turner

Pity for Gods

My son laid broken power at my feet,
And asked, "Will you mend my plastic bow?"
Nor questioned my strength but only my caprice,
Reasoned that if my bowshot could outreach
The farthest arrow from his straightest aim
So must my power to repair outrange
His utmost skill. Long, but quite in vain,
I argued the laws of glue and plastic strain.
With ageless patience he agreed, forgave,
And asked again, "Will you mend it, though?"

My cat brought her dead kitten to my chair,
Licked it and pressed her face into my hand.
Hand of the milk of life, the hand of grace
Would touch the kitten till it nursed again;
And when my fingers still hung limp, inert
She nuzzled them and grieved into my face.

Oh, pity, pity for gods who cannot give,
For the leaking heart unpowered at the hand,
For the tender whinney that stirs unfingered hooves,
The wordless lip—the lipless Word.

Alberta T. Turner

THREE POEMS

Dance

Sweating like a saint in holy pain,
The trumpeter weaves back and waves his horn
Above the dance, as though the sound were born
In aching blood and pulsed through every vein

Of that taut shape to bell at last on air.
Behind the horns, brushes touch the drum's
Skin, dry as locusts; and the beat comes
Walking, as the bass man, hunched like a bear,

Fingers the big-hipped fiddle. All bells ring
In dim, mysterious schoolroom where
Girls, gold as saxophones, teach youths to wear
The coat of music and the pants of spring.

Conrad Hilberry

Essay on Nature and Art

Thirsting for Nature's springs, the urban man
Packs children, lunch in salmon-pink sedan
And seeks the lake. There, keen to feel the breeze
He hires a boat, mounts his water skis,
And waving to a pier of sunning wives
He rises from the surf and coolly drives—
His white legs bent in rural attitude—
The forty horses tamed by Evenrude.
The children, meanwhile, taste the very water:
The girl does strokes as her instructor taught her,

And older brothers, full of derring-do,
Put on their fins, and snorkle in the blue.
And so goes Nature's day.

But stricter sects
Eschew the life the clubby type elects
And sleep with nothing but umbrella tents
Between themselves and northern elements.
(Close by, the state has cunningly designed
A house where Nature is relieved to find
Porcelain plumbing, and outlets for a razor.)

Nature's friends, in varied guises, praise her:
The angler with the Shakespeare spinning reel;
The khaki Scout, stirred with official zeal;
Cyclists, who scorn exhaust and supercharger,
Preferring three-speed shift by Sturmey-Archer;
And mountaineers, high on an Apennine,
Who execute rappelles on nylon line.

So Art improves on Nature; rightly so,
For who are those that scorn what Art can do?
Fallen in the pool from which he daily drinks,
The artless swimmer gives a cry, and sinks;
And Nature's climber, innocent of rope,
Slips from the face, and bloodies all the slope.

Then let Art thrive, let backyard chef go to it
With brazier, spit, briquettes, and lighter fluid;
Let golfer ride, and roto-gardener rest;
And let the artful ornithologist,
Remembering the chill of dawning tree,
Study his birds in high fidelity.

Conrad Hilberry

Gift on a Thirty-First Birthday

Though comically the giver planned
The gift bow tie, discreetly gay,
I, who had gone four-in-hand,
Now sport the small bow every day.

And other fopperies ensue:
I wear plaid walking shorts for tennis
And ask my haberdasher's view
Of what the right beret for men is.

Already I begin to covet
A Volkswagon to drive to school in
Or better—indeed, far above it—
An Alfa Romeo to tool in.

What voice is it of summer ruth
Calls up the spurious, the sporty
And makes an unpretentious youth
Go gaudily toward forty?

Conrad Hilberry

THREE POEMS

Iran

I am what this land is: adverse:
a seabed quenched, a sulfur sky, where
nurture is hard, there milk is wine, where
tender and perishing blooms the rain,
its petals fall sweet on hands and eyes . . .

Grace Mojtabai

I First Saw the World

I first saw the world
through lattice and shutter;
it hurt me, so fleshful: each
rose was a wound;
but since
I can safely come out in the open,
I'm as carnal as summer, as
ravaged as dawn.

Grace Mojtabai

An Onion

Youth was the time to cast for windfalls:
soon, I turn to find my fortune in the earth:
I grub in rumination, fist a token of those riches;
an onion, incandescent, deep in dusk, a dram ecstatic;
an onion, a small coin in the mintage of the soil.

Hobgoblin fruit, spoked as the sun:
a flask of fire, a well of cool: worth any liquor
that I know—for tucks and stitches of the tongue.

Small coin, large prosperity: sovereign
in a dynasty of dun: of textures, prodigal; of
chiaroscuro suns and dims: crackling bronze chaff,
lustrous satin—laved deep, yet deep within—
the pearl of the earth lies, glistering.

Grace Mojtabai

FOUR POEMS

To a Modern Tess in a Waiting Room

This autumn Sunday night
The moon curls on the sky
Like a rotting melon husk;
The last train joggles to a crawl
Through snapping, lanterned switchtracks
And freezes with a hiss.
Rigor mortis in a dead black eel.

Inside North Station
Attendants broom the midnight floor
And sawdust piles around your tired feet.
You hardly cared at all
For random stares owled out
From dipping magazines, and fell asleep.

Your ringless hands
Beneath your knitted shawl,
You drowse a double-body drowse,
A sewing sleep
Like mending sailors jabbing awls.
Events flash by like camera bulbs exploding dead.
You dream of gliding birds at dusk
And wounded creatures drinking at the sea;
You fly with outstretched arms
Through hot bleached hills of Queen Anne's lace.

A buzzer rings.
You stir and half-nod in the vacant room,
Caress your uncombed fingered hair
And vaguely hear the train outside
Like angry cats within your head.
The mucus ceiling lights grow large

And you awake.
Conscious of the gaudy walls,
The billboard for the Passion Play,
The Breck girl with the virginal face,
You stand, one leg numb with sleep
And scratch your belly itch.

This waiting room is a dead animal
Curled around a nursing hare.
You limp across the lobby floor;
Your loneliness is quick,
Like tearing tape from hairy flesh.

On Atlantic Avenue, carbon streetlamps purr
Like patient, tubercular cats.
Snug against your flesh, a tiny body
Kicks against the dark.

Donald Junkins

Elegy for Cressida

Gone from Troy! Now tongues wag pity and abuse
And senile scholars smirk in public at your loose
Behavior. So you gave young Troilus the axe?
They rail at you about your morals being lax.

But could soldier's pay keep you there outside the
Gates
So long, a weakling whore, trick of the Fates?
A kind of Trojan Helen, dished among the Greeks?
Where, I ask, was Diomedes all those weeks?

He was no second-rater, that's for sure;
No small time caddy for the ageing pure.
He was a Greek commander, sick of Troy
Who stole a lover from King Priam's boy.

Agamemnon ordered him inside the Trojan fence;
"Escort the ransomed Cressid to our tents."
This was a switch; a plush detail. He did his job.
Back with his men, he kept you from a horny mob.

Here were no paltry pimps with hungry red eyes
peeled.
There were flies and blood here. This was a battlefield.
No boudoir bantering; no headstrong, giddy boys.
No time for whimsy; no time at all for toys.

You made a choice, Cressida, in the dark.
This was no "adventure," no common bivouac lark.
Ignore the tawdry tongues that mutter, "Weak!"
You sacked the Trojan Prince to love that Greek.

Donald Junkins

The March Snows

In Boston, marshmallow streets
Are black and iron underneath
As midnight tracks are slushed aside
By wavering sedans. The heat from sewers
Steams the incandescent air
And red and orange signs blink rhythm, on and off.
A hound's tooth gleams, saliva drips;
The cats pad over alley garbages, and
Leaning out of windows, the night curses
Down the alley's echoing darkness
As fluffy sputum settles on the streets.
The carcass of the night
Is the city under fire
Like a corpse burning numbly in the snow.

In Wellesley, the creamy golf course
Levels, like liquid beveling in a cup.
The sun has fired the greening grass
That waters with this weight of snow,
But no blind man is teeing off tonight
Nor does the caddy search for pearls
Among the trees. The dark
Empties its dipper on the land
As one over-salts a steak,
And trackless hills are quiet
This off-season night
When furniture is draped with sheets.
Blown by the wind, an occasional tree
Fingers the shedding night
Like a cadaver raising a hand in protest.

Donald Junkins

Arlington Street Swan Song

This inventory night of rain and hush
My mind meanders like a stricken swan.

Twelve hours ago, your heels clicking on cement
I caught your eye, inhaled quickly
Turned, my stomach stumbling
Caught empty like a leaky pail
But you hurried down the subway
With a friend at five o'clock.

Now in the night harbor of my mind
Where water laps at lichen logs
Sunk straight and slippery
Like wooden tongues with rope
I'll stand inspection. Liquid mausoleum!

All the night long
I'll pass you by in my mind's eye
And turn to speak, and you ignore my look.
Three years disappear in a crowd.
And once again my brain hardens
Like old jello.

This old love of ours, this tired swan
That paddles through my tired mind this night
Approaches death. These last hours
Before the sun burns through the falling dark
I'll stand watch over surd remains.
Five o'clock tomorrow and the man selling flowers
In a cart. For a quarter I can stand by the water
Throwing pom-poms under the paddles of the swan
boats
Shuffling by.

Donald Junkins

A KIND OF ANTENNA

A man with a grotesque bone
sprouting from his brow—
He won't let you press it.

He says: "I'm the advance commando
beachheaded from Alpha Centaurus.
This chunk of bone rips my armor off.
Poke it and I blaze before you
in my most dragoned shape,
which nothing human can stand."

Yesterday he said:
"It's a devils' vault.
I sealed it with the wax
of my holy signet
when, in an earlier, smokier life
I moved as Solomon, son of gaunt David,
lover of dark, glowing Sheba,
prince of the seven levels
and corners of the universe.
It prisons six one-eyed djinns
with fists and faces
of congealed thunder,
pummeling fretfully
at its creepy thickness."

Sally waves a simpler image.
She says: "It's a kind of antenna
for reaching across—somewhere—and touching
someone.
You get to use it just once,
and he's not ready."

And Maggie the most simple:
"He means you should all drop dead,
or take your rotten side-show
to someone else's deformity."

Howard Ant

THE REAL

We kick our heels against the rocks.
Loons rush, two fluttering spots,
on the crimson pond. Head on head,
each one harder now succeeds
itself in a race to the black edge.
The child leans back against the rock,
clasps her hands about her knees,
and asks me if it's real or not.
I have told her that it is,
but watch the slicks turn slowly red
about the haunted island's edge;
watch the mist blur out the lines
that usually reassure our eyes . . .

Myrtle Chamberlin

THREE POEMS

Central Park Zoo: The Macaw Takes a Bath

The macaw is fuddled, she goes to the water,
silly old bird with blue wing feathers,
fire red breast and an orange body,
a jet black beak and a gear shot voice.

Eugenia Dolphin of Dallas Texas
is spending the winter months at the Plaza.

Sixty, but thinks of herself as thirty:
a dark of the eyes and a red of the nails,
a sky blue coat and fire red slippers
and a little black hat from Bonwit Teller's
cocked like a crest over bangs of henna.

Pert old bird with the gaudy feathers
down on her belly flat in the basin
fluffing her wings and ducking her head
trickling the water over her shoulders.

Mrs. Eugenia wanders shopping, and rain
has left its pool at the curbstone
and there in the puddle after the shower
is Mrs. Eugenia's bright reflection
flat on its belly over the water.

Fluffing her wings and scattering water
(the bird) and my dear what a beautiful sapphire
and do you think I should buy it really
dipping her head and squawking with pleasure,
but it wasn't the puddle along Fifth Avenue
that Mrs. Eugenia tried to wash herself in,
it was only the bathroom bowl at the Plaza
(guilt complex maybe) my dear it's awful
with a squawk and a flirt of the feathers
and now the breast and now the buttocks
(that of course has to be Mrs. Eugenia)
and then a preen of the tail and a chortle
and I said it's only a thousand dollars
and if I want it I'm going to have it
and don't we have a good time in our puddle?

Fred Lape

Woman under the Pines

She dropped her bulk on arbutus. "O nature,
my only temple. I merge with the all."
The pines above her were sweet with blossom.
The wind puffed pollen in yellow clouds.
It fell on her hands and she blew it off.
Trees might be a little cleaner.

A woodthrush poured water in the distance.
"When I'm in the woods I'm a pagan.
I should have been born in the olden days.
I wish I could hear a nightingale."
The woodthrush sang again, but her words
overpowered it. She squinted at sunlight
daring to find her face through the branches,
and drawing a compact, slendered the line
of her lips. "The sun makes me freckle."

An ant was crawling up her leg.
I let it bite her. The earth,
I figured, deserved some answer.

Fred Lape

John Beam

A little man, round faced and pudgy.
The neighbors wrote him off as cracked.
He lived with a dozen cats, five dogs,
a bowl of goldfish and a parakeet,
on a back road in the country.
When he was hungry he went to work.
The cats and dogs were never hungry.

I saw him once on an autumn night
after a round at the village bar,
trying to breast a roaring wind
that was tossing clouds at the moon.
It tossed him finally off the path
and left him lying flat in the leaves.
All five of his dogs jumped upon him,
whining and licking his face and hands.
He opened his arms and folded them in.
The moon came out and he grinned it back,
a drunken man and a drunken moon
in a world made for the happy.

Fred Lape

THE WATCH CHAIN

There was a man like other men
but more a man than many are.
He kept a watch upon a chain
and (also on the chain) a star.

Each morning, when the watch was wound,
he rubbed the star to make it shine.
The watch hands moved, and time went round,
and every day was dark or fine.

Save for a quiet, reaching pride,
there was not much the man could own.
When time had stopped for him, he died
and left the watch to run alone.

Although it told the hours as true,
the watch brought little, being old.
The star (as private stars will do)
tarnished the moment it was sold.

Kaye Starbird

GROUNDS FOR GRIEF

Imprisoned here in the long dark
The grounds of our grief give in, the earth drifts
In crusted pieces slowly around the pole
As in the midst of tears a child sighs,
The bowels shift, softly the lungs lift,
The round rib-cage heaves, and suddenly, released,
Collapses into temporary calm. So in the ark
The troubled old bone-shed of our caged loves,
Approaching the mooring-place the cargo moves
From one side to the other. We bump into the dock
And the dove suddenly appears, white as a sigh
She whispers and breathes above us rest, rest,
And we rest on a soft green breast
But oh, my child, we are here such a little while.
Though we circle the pole and return again and again
To this bright weather, these latitudes, and this light
We are moving, we are moving inexorably towards
night.

Patricia Goedicke

I HEAR THE HOCKED HORSE

I hear the hocked horse, its hooves;
Its bones under the boy; and bells
Breaking; the spell of spine; the rib-barred
Belly sides. How he rode! the boy's
Brittle belt bones; hoof-clomp; noise
Scattering chickens, their hackles,
Heads; their flaming squawks fanning past
Hacking the wind; past wagons of corn;
Past pond, small silver oval, pale
With enchanted oaks; owls;
Grassy to the water's edge the grave
Gray nag; plush hooves pressing;
And under the oaks; shades, shadows;
With hoof strokes. Boy, the hay
Was heaven! the white dust rising
In the loft flame, and the burning birds;
How they slipped their wings! under the roof
Shafts of sun; and how
Wasps went with nipped waists;
Mud makers; and the swallows slept.
And the small boy, sleeping and waking
Under the haystack; suns and moons
Whitening doorways, the black night's
Domain; and the owl's hoot
Hovering; and on the water's sheen
Images of silence, and the soaring
Green
Unbreakable oaks.

Jack Crawford, Jr.

EXERCISE IN CONSONANCE

Sam, sorting piles of lettuce, stacked to add,
Looked up and saw the Law with stick and badge.
He found this new experience very odd,
But when the Uniform refused to budge,
He left his kit and tools, turned tail and fled
Down to the river-bank, plunged in to dredge
His sharp nose in the weeds below the flood.
Across, and soaking, he approached his drudge,
(Sometime ago his doll), and made a bid
For dry apparel and a crackling ridge
Of greenbacks for the pockets. "Mame's no bud,"
He thought, "Her hide's all cracked beneath her
rouge.
I don't want her in bed, but in a bout
Like this, she can be useful, not a doubt."

Sara deFord

HOMAGE TO COLERIDGE
(Hommage à Coleradge)

Albert Ross
perched on a pinnacle
pierced the pie in the sky
with his piquéd beak
outseeing eye.

O marin err
which marin ate
the herring do
the wedding guest
who came too late

the groggy groom
who came too soon
the broody bride
the dewy doom
say who are the wild waves wooing?

O shrink
the shriving boards
and sheathe
the glistening scale
of crab and snail
of snowy whale
and rusted cans of vanished ale
the salt encrusted sperm.

Who fears thy fang
the mermaids sang
to do the doe who did the same
to doe the did the same who do
they made her QUEEN!—
Miss Upper Seeweedia
from the lower depths.

L'Envoi

Becrowned insceptered
And conthroned
She stoppeth one of three

While Albert Ross
With leaden thunk
Kaplunketh to the sea.

Nicholas Biel

TWO POEMS

Feeding Stations

When the brain rattles with winter
sometimes the icy eye will melt
and know the little famines in the snow,
the gang of starlings that shriek and slash
around the crusts and the fish scraps,
good woman's mite, dropped by her daughter
for dove, song sparrow, and Christ child.

A frozen dozen have ridden the white wind
from garage to ground, clash wildly,
scatter the flakes with Chaplin staggers,
turned ravenous by no confetti Yukon,
their yellow stabbings a fury against kind.

The fluttering mates they excite,
deep and vestigial in the viscera!
Whirled out of storms of the past,
squeezed through the sinews from groin
to heart, pumped to the throat, they pop
at last into the mind, a flock of hungers
that swoop upon sparrow, child, wife,
and the scraps of a frozen god.

Who reads and translates these orgies of birds?
No comic drunk in tuxedo has mimed such pathetic
horror.
No Buchenwald stick-man has raked so over garbage.

For the black scavengers fly from the eye
at the window: they stream up the white wind
over the glaciered roof; and the frantic
wings, the fierce beaks, the prints

of the tiny talons,
even the memory,
are swept
sterile in two gusts of a March blizzard.

Donald W. Baker

Casualties

Southering to the mosses of the bayous,
the wild geese ring dawn over the oaks.
From the feathertips of their point,
the pilot whose marvelous metronome
is brain laid bare, the tactics ripple
down the echelons. Behind that V
of melody the stragglers veer like kites.
One false note labors low over my head
on torn feathers and a dangling web.

A long time ago, wishing for June,
I used to smash the rotten April ice
on frogponds in the woods. Once in the muck
I found a huge Canadian carcass,
its ropy neck, wrenched bill, and gaping
sockets outraged by slime.
Through my boy's eye that ruin rained
red images, like flies buzzing
in blood, and tainted June
with broken feathers floating on the pond.

Racing the high north, these October geese
trumpet from cloud to cloud, while faintly
shaking a brown leaf with his last thrust
the cripple glides toward the clutch of oak.
The flight is passing south, in a diminished sun:
only a bird lies wrecked upon the land.

Donald W. Baker

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